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C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 001284

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SE GRATION, S/USSES, AF A/S, AF/C, AF/E
NSC FOR MGAVIN, LETIM
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

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TAGS: ASEC PGOV PINS PREL CH FR SU

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR GHAZI REPORTS PRODUCTIVE
VISIT TO FRANCE, EXPRESSES CONCERN ON PROPOSED REBEL
CONFERENCE

REF: KHARTOUM 1273

Classified By: CDA Robert E. Whitehead, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶11. (C) Summary: In a November 16 meeting, Presidential Advisor Dr. Ghazi Salaheddin told CDA Whitehead that he was encouraged by French officials' support for Chad-Sudan rapprochement during Ghazi's recent trip to France. He welcomed the upcoming visit of US Special Envoy (SE) Scott Gration to Sudan, as well as the prospect of additional US-led trilateral talks to examine outstanding CPA issues. He expressed reservations about the proposed Darfur rebel unification conference in Jebel Marra, noting that the size of the conference could raise significant security issues for the GOS, but did not say that the conference should not go ahead. Ghazi repeatedly expressed concern that the conference could antagonize the Government of Libya, which is carrying out its own rebel unification efforts. End Summary.

¶12. (C) Having just returned from France, Ghazi reported that French officials, including Minister Kouchner and the senior Elysees African Advisor, had voiced full approval of the initiative to promote rapprochement between Chad and Sudan. Ghazi further noted that his French interlocutors appeared increasingly irritated with intransigent Paris-based Sudanese Liberation Army/AW Chairman Abdul Wahid Al Nur. "I sensed some measure of despair when they spoke of him," he remarked. The French did not, however, bring up of the kidnapping of two French nationals working for International Committee of the Red Cross in Darfur and Eastern Chad.

¶13. (C) Ghazi welcomed the upcoming visit of SE Gration to Sudan, and the prospect of an additional round of US-led trilateral talks if senior Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) leadership is available to attend. (Note: SPLM has confirmed to us that it will be represented at senior levels. End note.) Ghazi lamented that while SPLM officials in the Government of National Unity have returned to their posts at the Council of Ministers, the party's MPs have still not returned to parliament. In reference to the SE's planned visit to Abyei, Ghazi suggested that Special Envoy Gration be accompanied by representatives of both the National Congress Party and SPLM in the proposed travel to Abyei and Southern Kordofan to reassure their respective constituencies that implementation of the Permanent Court of Arbitration border ruling on Darfur will not deprive any of the residents of the area of traditional rights. CDA agreed and has lined up a senior representative from each party.

¶14. (C) On Darfur, Ghazi expressed surprise at the size of the proposed rebel unification conference in Jebel Marra, noting that "such a large gathering could pose security issues for

our side." As such, he noted that he would request National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) Director Mohammed Atta to appoint a senior officer to liaise with the conference organizers on the transport of rebels to Darfur from outside of Sudan, and other groups within Darfur, to the proposed conference site. Ghazi also urged that Special Envoy Gration contact the Government of Libya to explain the conference, as Ghazi feared that "it may be seen by the Libyans as an attempt to undercut their efforts" at rebel unification. Ghazi emphasized that the GOS itself must also be convinced as to what the outcome of such a conference would be before committing to future events.

¶15. (C) Comment: In a pull aside after the meeting, Ghazi reiterated to CDA his concern that the Libyans might view a rebel unification meeting in Darfur as an attempt to undermine the Libyan initiative. He also hoped that the rebels would not misinterpret the presence of foreign officials at the conference as a tilt toward the rebels by the international community, and ignore the intended message that rebel movements and civil society must work toward unity and a political solution within the Doha Process. Ghazi's office reached out to CDA later in the day to inform that a GOS security liaison will coordinate with us on necessary arrangements for the conference.

WHITEHEAD